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## **Theoretical constructs of well-being and their implications for education**

### **Abstract**

In the broad area of moral philosophy, critiques of well-being values have recently increased. Often underpinning analysis are contrasting theories of well-being e.g., subjective constructs that value highly reflections on personal experiences and individual fulfillment, and objective theories which emphasize more through specific criteria the societal benefits of well-being. Without detailed recourse to such theorizing, education policy making has recently tried to tease out the relationship between thriving personally and showing moral integrity towards others via a number of rather superficial and dissimilar curriculum statements. The paper, in trying to improve coherence in this area, reviews contemporary critiques of well-being and argues that a hybridized mix of subjective and objective influences, would if referenced by pupils own reflective informed thoughts and emotional needs, represent the most productive prospect for education-related developments. The priorities for achieving this form of progress begins by reviewing the main curriculum planning issues which merit analysis if well-being theorizing is to more closely connect with educational gains. Thereafter, the main challenge discussed is how teachers can maximize the benefits of pedagogical practices in holistic learning environments where there are clear connections between well-being values, subject knowledge and pupils previous learning experiences.

**Keywords: Well-being, Values, Curriculum, Pedagogy**

## **Introduction**

Despite the international consensus there is on the importance of pupil achievement and personal well-being, there continues to be very little philosophical-informed policy elaboration on the latter of these considerations, and specifically on how well-being values can articulate with curriculum planning and teachers pedagogical practices. As White (2007, p. 17) indicates, a contribution that philosophy of education can make in this respect ‘is to explicate the concept of personal wellbeing’. This might help improve the situation, nationally and internationally, for as Soutter, O’Steen and Gilmore (2012) note, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are among the few countries to have explicitly reviewed well-being in the context of secondary schooling (i.e., for pupils of 12-18 years). In the case of the United Kingdom, well-being policy and curriculum arrangements continue to be defined by marked differences (Thorburn, 2014). In England, for example, well-being as part of personal and social education is a non-statutory component of current National Curriculum plans. By contrast, the study of ‘Citizenship’ is a compulsory part of the curriculum and centers on improving understanding of: Democracy and Justice; Rights and Responsibilities and Identities and Diversity (Department for Education, 2013). A different approach is taken in Scotland, where ‘Education for Citizenship’ is one of a number of generic themes of learning (e.g., others include creativity, enterprise, sustainable development) which are designed to permeate the curriculum. However, personal well-being occupies a more prominent curriculum role and is along with literacy and numeracy, one of three key responsibilities of all teachers, plus a subject specific responsibility for those teachers who have a specific health and well-being remit (Scottish Executive, 2006).

Thus, while there are some inter-United Kingdom similarities in terms of well-being values e.g., with regard to the dispositions of choice, happiness, relationships and health, there are clear differences in terms of curriculum positioning and priority. This has attracted criticism in itself e.g., Ecclestone (2013) considers that the general privileging of personal well-being dispositions in Scotland can undermine the importance of subject knowledge and alter the ways in which teachers

interpret curriculum reforms and relate to pupils. Biesta (2013) is also concerned that the personal focus on well-being makes it more difficult for pupils to focus on the underpinnings of democratic citizenship. In England, the Citizenship curriculum emphasis on democracy and justice and rights and responsibilities might also require further explanation in terms of how it articulates with the different forms of school provision which now exist, especially as these are becoming increasingly selective and specialized in nature (Ball, 2013). By contrast, the comprehensive schooling ideal remains dominant in Scotland even though the version of well-being being advanced is, as noted, more focused on personal well-being than collective moral goodness (Biesta, 2013).

**The influences which led to personal well-being being considered as an important contributor to pupils overall development in Scotland are quite diverse. Humes (2011) believes that an amalgam of adopting a broader perspective on learning which includes the affective dimension combined with concerns that a lack of well-being might result in underachievement fuelled the curriculum prioritizing of personal well-being. This latter consideration reflects a partial Scottish engagement with the type of therapeutic culture ambitions which are a particular concern of governments and supra national bodies with an interest in equity, social justice and the emotional well-being of young people (Layard & Dunn, 2009). However, authors such as Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) are critical of the lack of debate on such matters and the extent to which advocates of therapeutic culture agendas have often influenced educational policy discussions recently. This has led to an imbalance in curriculum outcomes, with the inclusion of ‘a plethora of attributes, skills, values and dispositions’ (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009, p. 385) muddying the margins between the educational and emotional responsibilities of schools and the home. However, for the present engagement with therapeutic culture concerns remain relatively restrained. This is evident through the retention of a subject dominated curriculum model (Scottish Education, 2006) allied with the belief that using emerging classroom based examples of practice (rather than imposing more**

**prescribed teaching arrangements) is the best way to highlight new curriculum possibilities (Thorburn, 2014). These intentions confirm that there is not a widespread disillusionment with traditional subjects and that personal well-being is predominantly perceived of as being a supportive addition to curriculum teaching rather than part of a more radical repositioning of educational aims. Recent policy advice reinforces this view through emphasizing that all teachers should be sensitive and responsive to the well-being of every pupil and create learning environments where pupils are listened to and actively involved in class discussions (Education Scotland, 2014). Methodologically, the intention is that greater holistic and interdisciplinary learning will play a key role in connecting well-being values with subject knowledge imperatives in order to make learning more meaningful for pupils. On this basis, personal well-being is part of an asset-based approach to learning that aims to help pupils take on more responsibility for their progress (Education Scotland, 2014).**

In Australia, preparations for the first national curriculum adopt a seven-fold generic capabilities approach as a device for enhancing cross-curriculum learning and teaching (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013). The closest of the seven areas to well-being - personal and social capability - is underpinned more by psychological than philosophical evidence, as noted by extended references to ‘multiple intelligences’ Gardner (1983) and ‘social intelligence’ Goleman (2006). In practice, a psychologically-informed focus on capabilities e.g., personal attributes such as resilience, courage and determination and social dimensions such as group learning is likely to be very different from cognitive-informed definitions of well-being which emphasize more the importance of reflecting critically on happiness and personal decision-making (Clack, 2012). Furthermore, there are reservations about how developmental accounts (such as a capabilities approach) can work well when the focus is on personal value judgements (White, 2006).

Collectively, these developments suggest that understanding better the contrasting theoretical influences on personal well-being is necessary: for as Tiberius and Plakias (2010, p. 402) note, in a policy context ‘it makes a big difference what conception of well-being one adopts.’ On this basis, the paper through examining contemporary critiques of well-being, analyzes the challenges for achieving greater curriculum coherence as well as reviewing the main pedagogical practice issues which merit analysis if educational gains are to be achieved in mainstream secondary school contexts. The review concentrates mostly on explanations of well-being, where well-being is taught in holistic learning environments where there are strong links between well-being values, subject knowledge necessities and the lives and previous learning experiences of pupils. Thus, as the focus adopted is primarily a personal-philosophical one, wider political, social and economic considerations are not addressed in great depth, even though it is acknowledged in advance that further well-being research from a wider education-in-society perspective is also much needed.

### **Theoretical constructs of well-being**

Interest in ideas about the ingredients of personal well-being and of how lives are faring relative to societal norms has become critiqued in more nuanced terms in recent decades with the term ‘well-being’ entering the lexicon of theoretical critiques of values in moral philosophy. Previously, the terms ‘happiness’, ‘utility’ and ‘welfare’, all of which have more ancient philosophical origins, tended to be the standard terms for reviewing ‘quality of life’ type issues. Emerging from initial critiques by leading theorists was a triptych of target-driven possibilities whereby well-being could either position itself, primarily as a subjective theory based on desire fulfillment (Griffin, 1986) or life-satisfaction (Sumner, 1996), or as an objective list theory (Parfit, 1984). These critiques have been recently reviewed in terms of their normative and empirical adequacy, and in terms of what the components of a well-lived life contain. This has led Tiberius (2013a) to extend to five the main theories of personal well-being by adding hedonism and nature fulfillment theories to the three theories previously mentioned.

**As far as subjective informed theories of well-being are concerned, hedonism theories place a premium on pleasure and with fostering a sense of being pleased with the positive decisions made following experiences. Such thinking has a utilitarian lineage dating back to Bentham and Mill. However, as most educational contexts nowadays require engagement with specific subject-based objectives, it is doubtful whether hedonism theorizing would be sufficient to meet in full the requirements of most curriculum. This is not to dismiss hedonisms contribution entirely though, for as no lesser figure than R.S. Peters (whose analytical philosophical theorizing in the 1960s was so influential in advancing arguments for the development of the rational mind through academically-informed curriculum) notes ‘there is nothing particularly wicked about the conservative pleasures derived from repetition and familiarity’ (Peters 1977, p. 117). Therefore, it is quite possible to argue that hedonist theories are relevant, especially in those areas of the curriculum where considerable enjoyment-based advocacy of subject connections with positive well-being is evident (Pringle, 2010).**

The combined challenge for desire fulfillment and life-satisfaction theories is to indicate how self-beliefs can provide an account of values and worthwhileness which moves beyond satisfying individual needs and preferences. The claimed advantage of desire fulfillment theories is that they can enable individual variability at the same time as fitting within an overarching unified theory. As a counterpoint to the contrasting reasoning and passion based philosophies of Plato and Hume, Griffin (1996, p. 32) argues that ‘reason and desire are not independent enough for one to be the master and the other slave.’ So conceived, practical reasoning is not inert but rather something which should be considered as part of our motivation and our desires. In this way, the old interpretation of there being one overarching substantive value should be replaced by a finer grained teasing out of what is prudentially valuable for persons (Griffin, 1996). The main downside of desire fulfillment theories is that people often make irrational or ill-advised judgements. The

remedy for this difficulty is to make theorizing idealized by outlining how it is only certain informed desires which contribute to personal well-being (Griffin, 1986). Thus, a mix of subjective and objective elements can aid theoretical coherence, provided the advantages of privileging certain desires is not overly constrained by the narrowness of what counts as an informed value. **Framed this way, it is possible to see connections with hedonism theorizing, as both theories would in an educational context see the merits of a personalized and voluntary engagement with many areas of the curriculum e.g., Art, Music, Literature, Languages and Science, in ways which suggest that opportunities for involvement in these areas should be available as an on-going part of pupils' wider education.**

The main advocate of life-satisfaction theory, Sumner (1996), considers that authentic happiness can provide the endorsement necessary for connecting life satisfaction with welfare values. Authenticity is achieved when a person's own values are central to their evaluation of well-being. In this way Sumner (1996) argues that his informed life-satisfaction thinking overtakes the main limitation of Griffin's (1986) theorizing i.e., that the desires one might have are not necessarily coherent with what is best for one's own personal flourishing. The main problem with life-satisfaction theories is that people might be constrained by lack of information or degrees of oppression. As such, the prospects for this theory might be dependent on the degree of objective information people have when they make decisions. This has opened up recent strands of theorizing which has distinguished values from desires (Raibley, 2010), and which accentuate the need for values to be stable over time and realistic if they are to form the basis of our choices and reviews of how well our lives are faring. Nevertheless, Haybron (2008) retains reservations about how the arbitrary and wide-ranging influences on our judgements can make self-analysis misleading. As such, our views on life satisfaction might differ from our well-being values. Haybron (2008) cites, for example, how the onset of serious illness would change perceptions of life satisfaction even though our well-being values might remain more constant.



Collectively, a distinguishing feature of desire fulfillment and life-satisfaction theories is that they tend to require idealizing (objective) constraints, so that the more unreliable aspects of subjectivism are of limited influence. This is a tricky matter however, as in philosophical rather than psychological contexts values are inescapably normative and value-laden. Therefore, the challenge is in ensuring that there is a consistency between a person's internal values and those they aspire towards or which are set for them as targets. To some extent this involves trying to square an impossible circle; for if values require a human evaluation component in order to be explained then our evaluations cannot be considered as objective. Angner (2010) outlines how measures of well-being need to ideally satisfy both a relevance criterion and a validity criterion. However, he questions how this is possible to achieve, as there are limits to how valid subjective measures of well-being can be while remaining relevant and also how relevant values can be if they are to remain valid and objective. Thus, adequacy criteria that can simultaneously satisfy both 'the relevance and validity criteria has much to be said for it, given that it can successfully represent well-being in some normatively relevant sense' (Angner, 2010, p.2). Making reliable and valid type connections and establishing adequacy criteria is dependent on engaging with objective theories of well-being. This line of thinking would also recognize the historic origins of well-being, as even though subjective theories now tend to occupy something of a default position in terms of justification, as Tiberius (2013a, p. 27) notes, no 'one in the Ancient world thought that what things are good for you would be determined by your own subjective attitudes.'

The simplest type of objective theory is a list theory against which measurements of well-being can be made. The problem with these lists is that the criteria specified might not be important to people. To overcome this limitation, two more specific forms of objectively influenced nature fulfillment theories have recently been developed. The first of these (the human nature fulfillment theory) is based on the concept of function; and developments such as Nussbaum's (2000) capabilities

approach is an attempt to describe necessary functional outcome-based attributes. **The capability approach is a broad normative framework for highlighting the well-being values underpinning human flourishing. The approach is also capable of measuring how well a person's life is fairing, and of how well a person's life is fairing relative to others. As Robeyns (2005) notes the defining characteristics of the capability approach are its broad interdisciplinary focus on well-being and the capacity the approach has to highlight the differences there are between the subjective and the objective i.e., between substantive freedoms (capabilities) and outcomes (achieved functionings). Capability approach studies are widely used in analysing many areas of welfare economics and social policy and in an educational context can be used to draw attention to structural issues such as the influences schools can have on the development of young people's capabilities. Nussbaum (2000, p. 156) advises that as far as young people's education is concerned that 'governments will be well advised to require functioning of children, not simply capability ... (and that consequently) ... we should tolerate less deference to individual - or parental - choice'. While many may concur with such reasoning e.g., in areas such as literacy and numeracy, it may be less so with regard to personal well-being as not everyone is seeking or desiring the same normative attributes. This has led to the development of a more individually-driven nature fulfillment theory, where list items are determined by the extent to which they match peoples' emotional needs and contribute to their happiness (Haybron, 2008). This theory has similarities with life satisfaction theory (Sumner, 1996), in that happiness must be autonomous in nature and not unduly constrained by lack of information.**

In summary, Figure 1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the main influences which define subjective and objective theories of personal well-being at this time. The inner circle is designed to show how informed values and desires can connect subjective theories with objective well-being theories. The outer circle is designed to portray the same relationship through highlighting the

connections between subjective-informed desire fulfillment and life satisfaction theories and objectively-informed target driven theories i.e., human nature and individually driven fulfillment theories. The connecting (broken circle and lower case) links around the outer periphery indicate the key elements which can help bind subjective and objective theories of well-being together. The main educational concern arising from the brief theoretical overview is what personal well-being values might best suit educational circumstances and how could these values, be progressed in practice. **Nussbaum (2000, p. 156) highlights with specific reference to the capabilities approach these type of challenges when noting that we ‘need to attend carefully to issues of both pedagogy and content, asking how both the substance of study and the nature of classroom interactions fulfill the aims’ we wish to see being taken forward.**

*Enter Figure 1 close to here*

### **Well-being values and educational planning**

The mix of influences on schooling, not least the requirement in most instances to provide evidence of how learning articulates with assessment arrangements, suggests that a wholly subjective well-being theory would be insufficient. Moreover, an objective requirement, especially one which was not overly idealized, might provide the definition required in clarifying the nature of the well-being values informing educational planning. For these reasons, a hybridized mix of subjective and objective elements, as evident in desire fulfillment theories (Griffin, 1986) or a values-informed version of life satisfaction theory (Raibley, 2010), could if linked to objective criteria which are partly referenced by pupils own emotional needs, represent the most productive prospect for education-related theorizing. Moving forward on this basis could involve, for example, engaging with Griffin’s (1986, p. 70) fivefold classification of values and general features of life which aim to provide ‘an important standard for judging most (ordinary) human lives.’ The five values Griffin (1986) selects are: accomplishment; deep personal relations; enjoyment; understanding and

components of human existence (which includes agency considerations such as autonomy and liberty). These values reflect Haybron's (2008) advice that a subjective-informed values framework needs to be quite specific and particular in terms of its application.

The work of Tiberius (2008) is also useful to consider as it outlines a reflective wisdom framework for reviewing how to make good choices in order to live well and wisely. Even though, Tiberius's theorizing (as with Griffin, 1986) is not written with education contexts specifically in mind, White (2011, p.147) considers that Tiberius's (2008) thinking provides 'a good account of the virtues of reflectiveness, perspective and self-knowledge.' Tiberius's (2008) four chosen values (attention flexibility, perspective, self-awareness and realistic optimism) aim to balance achievable standards in normative areas such as personal growth and relationships with others while also recognizing the subjective importance of being absorbed in experiences which fully engage with our interests, skills and capacities. This mix appreciates the virtues people continue to endorse as being personally fulfilling, as well as recognizing the changing influences on society e.g., the need for people to take on a more constructive attitude towards managing their overall health. This line of theorizing suggests that through better quality reflection people can make stable values connections; and as cognition and emotion develop together, people can progressively endorse and justify the decisions they make. Tiberius (2008) considers that her reflective wisdom framework evades the significance problems attached to hedonist accounts of well-being values and also avoids being too closely aligned with objectivist-informed normative measures that often make too many presumptions about the worthlessness of subjective experiences. Moreover, as the values identified by Tiberius (2008) are relatively conservative in nature, based as they are on a cognitive-inclined and reflective perspective on well-being, it could be argued that this aids their connection to the subject-based schooling arrangements which exist in most countries.

However, there are concerns that Tiberius's extended commitment towards using 'our experience as the only source of answers to our normative questions' (Tiberius, 2008, p. 6) is problematic in a number of respects. The first relates to the difficulty there might be in using self-beliefs as the normative device for providing an account of well-being values; as a subjective-informed account may prove shallow and insufficiently action guiding. Angner (2011) argues, for example, that subjectively experienced mental states are only indirect and imperfect measures of well-being. The contribution of Annas (2011) might allay these types of concerns as she considers that learning routine practical skills can become the situated context for developing expertise; for as practical expertise improves so in parallel does practical reasoning. Thus, following Griffin (1996), if we are sufficiently motivated by improvement we should be able to use our improved abilities to reflect, to become more expert at reviewing the reasons which underpin the decisions we make. In this respect, the coupling Annas (2011) makes between expertise in practical skills and expertise in practical reasoning supports Tiberius's (2008) thinking. This is evident by the endorsement Annas (2011) provides for arguing that improved practical reasoning is helpful in articulating the reasons we have for our justified convictions and for the decisions we make about how we wish to live our lives (Tiberius, 2013b).

A further challenge to Tiberius (2008) account of well-being is that the premium afforded to rational reflection might not be merited, as reflection can be prone to bias, inaccuracy, confusion and distortion. Kornblith (2012) does not believe that reflection has special powers and instead considers that reflection suffers from problems of infinite regress. Thus, if we have problems in our lives, secondary reflections will not rectify these primary problems. If it does, then there is a problem with the accuracy of our secondary reflections. The upshot of this line of thinking is that reflective scrutiny is not required in order to make personal beliefs more reliable. Instead, Kornblith (2012) considers that what matters is whether beliefs are reason-responsive, rather than whether they are accompanied by reflection. Keller (2011) has similar concerns, noting that living a life

which you value on reflection may be different to a life based on your initial values, and of what made these comparable or distinctive relative to other people in the first place. For this reason, Keller (2011, p. 789) doubts that our personal values can play a foundational role in ‘moving from the idea of reflective endorsement to the values of self-direction and life-satisfaction, and then to the live of reflective wisdom’. Moreover, from a moral psychology perspective, studies have also shown that people often rely on their gut instinct and a scattered approach to values decision-making; in short, an approach which owes little to reflection (Doris, 2009). This can lead in some instances to people reaffirming their convictions, even when these are shown to be inaccurate (Wilson and Dunn, 2004). Collectively these findings highlight how there is often a conflict between our unreflective and reflective responses.

In light of such criticism, Tiberius (2013b, p. 224) is aware of the need to launch ‘a defense of reflection against what seems like an increasingly hostile environment for reflection and reasoning.’ Tiberius (2013b, p. 230) considers that we cannot separate reflection and values and consequently we cannot resolve ‘a conflict one way rather than another without reflections on what’s appropriate given certain norms and standards’. As such, it is not possible to make a normative assessment of whether we are making the right type of values decisions without recourse to subjective-based practical reasoning on why our decisions are appropriate. Therefore, those who are less practiced in reflection are more likely to make shallow or normatively imprecise values justifications. Based on this line of defense, the next part of the paper considers what the implications of this type of reasoning might be for curriculum planning and pedagogical practices. Thus, the plan is to consider in a secondary schooling context, how a coupling of subjective and objective elements of well-being could be taken forward in holistic learning contexts where there are clear connections between well-being values, subject knowledge and pupils previous learning experiences. It is recognized in advance that this plan might appear rather narrow in character relative to the multidimensional nature of education nowadays and also insufficiently bold relative to the

aspiration of some authors. For example, White (2011) sees the positioning of well-being in curriculum planning as a key contributor to arguments in favour of a more fundamental review of the relationship between schools and society. Nevertheless, as the next section of the paper aims to reduce the potential theory-practice gap which might otherwise exist, the precise school and teacher focus on how well-being learning and teaching could be enhanced is considered merited.

### **Educating for well-being: improving curriculum planning and pedagogical practices**

In terms of how well-being values articulate with curriculum guidelines, Soutter et al., (2012) found in New Zealand that there was also a lack of consensus across disciplines and sectors about what well-being means and that it was difficult to match various curriculum statements with the overall educational vision being set out. Similar problems exist in Scotland, where the new style of streamlined policy reporting is often characterized by statements of general aspiration rather than by more detailed elaboration on how new policies link with curriculum planning and pedagogical practice expectations (Thorburn, 2014). As such, there is a need to critically consider how learning environments could contain both a subjective worth for pupils and the capacity for objective subject knowledge content to be taught and (as necessary) assessed and recorded. Coherent progress on this basis could claim to fulfil the adequacy criteria defined by Angner (2010); as progressive engagement with subject information (validity criteria) could support and co-exist with pupils reviewing their values and conceptions of a life going well (relevance criteria). In these types of settings, teachers would be encouraged to make full use their decision-making responsibilities in order to make sound and plausible connections between pupils' well-being values, their previous learning experiences and subject knowledge imperatives. Over time and via on-going interactive questions and discussion, pupils would be encouraged to critically engage with their emotional needs in learning environments where their experiences enriched their overall perspective of how their lives are faring. Teachers, with practice, should become increasingly expert at judging the size and scope of learning tasks and better able to think through when to intervene and ask questions,

and when to wait longer for answers to emerge. Progress on these lines could match Tiberius's (2013b, p. 234) intention that cultivating reflection has sufficient flexibility to be 'a rough recipe, a loose grouping of ends or values arranged in a network or web, or a set of very general principles that require great sensitivity to context for their application'.

Recent evidence from schools in countries where personal well-being teaching is underway highlights that making progress with the types of learning approaches is likely to be variable, at best, without further professional support for teachers. In England, Formby and Wolstenholme (2012) found that secondary schools were frequently using discrete lessons and thematic days as teaching approaches rather than integrating well-being with subject knowledge and pupils' prior learning experiences. Moreover, along with Kidger et al., (2010), Formby and Wolstenholme (2012) found that teaching well-being was sometimes viewed as more of an obstruction than a benefit to the academic life of the school and therefore of little, if any help, in raising pupil attainment. Thus, in only a few schools was there evidence of pupils' subjective perspective on their needs being seen as a constructive contributor to educational achievement. In addition, in Scotland, Porciani (2013) reports that, as far as health and well-being teaching in secondary schools is concerned, there is often a gap between teachers who are seeking greater pedagogical guidance and national curriculum organizations who expect teachers to take on greater responsibility for their own teaching practices. In New Zealand, Soutter et al., (2012) noted similar findings and also found that as progression through secondary schooling continued the evidence of learning experiences being dominated by assessment-related subject tasks increased.

Furthermore, Formby and Wolstenholme (2012) identified that teachers' often felt uncomfortable and lacking in confidence when engaging pupils in discussions about their personal values and decision-making. This is perhaps to be expected given that one of the main problems of subjective-informed values theorizing is that people will often make poor choices. Thus, in educational (as in



other) contexts, progress is unlikely to be linear and uncomplicated. This can place teachers in something of a pedagogical bind; for in certain situations they will need to balance recognizing pupils' own views at the same time as referencing pupils' values alongside certain norms and expectations of their professional role (Angner, 2010). These difficulties are evident in multiple everyday teaching situations where teachers find themselves both encouraging pupils to cultivate their reflective abilities (relevance and context) and then engaging with them on the appropriateness (validity) of the choices they make. Such situations could arise let's say in situations where pupils are making decisions when learning outdoors which trigger some degree of personal/professional dubiety in teachers. This could happen, for example, in situations where pupils were considered to be displaying undue ecological sensitivity towards their local habitat or to be unduly intolerant of other pupils' values on such matters. The sense of being in a pedagogical quandary can also exist as a form of institutional paternalism as well; for example, in situations where teachers are expected to endorse wider school values on matters such as school uniform arrangements, even though their own value preferences may be relatively laissez-faire or more stringent relative to school expectations. Davies (2013, p. 475) has recently tried to elaborate on these dilemmas by teasing out more precisely teachers' institutional and educative role and by characterizing school teaching as being not just a complex activity 'but a complex set of different activities co-located in one place and engaged in by the same agents.' Davies (2013) critique about how teachers in the future might better come to move more seamlessly between their different roles and within different social practices requires further elaboration. Nevertheless, it highlights for the present the importance of teachers being patient and confident in their teaching, and concurs with Higgins (2011) belief that the multiple challenges teachers face should not become so onerous or constraining that their own self-cultivation is impaired.

Given the above complexities, the intention now is to say something further on some of the most pressing pedagogical issues teachers might face in helping their pupils to see the well-being

informed benefits of holistic learning practices. In taking forward learning practices which articulate with a version of well-being that is founded on a mix of subjective and objective elements, the position taken here largely follows MacIntyre's (2007) Aristotelian-informed view that it is from inside practices that pupils and teachers can 'encounter thick and distinctive notions about what it is worthwhile to participate in, excellent to achieve and admirable to become' (Higgins, 2011, p. 50). In such settings, pupils should aim to become increasingly adept at cultivating the right types of stable value judgements; in short, of displaying practical wisdom as evident through their focus on achieving excellences of character. This line of thinking is consistent with Carr's (2006) view of professional and personal values in education, where he notes that teachers need to move beyond being effective and efficient in a technical sense and become concerned as well with the moral dimensions of education and with pupils flourishing. Viewed on this basis the goods internal to practice have transferable gains, as engaging in practice can increase the ways in which pupils make expert-informed value judgements. For example, with regard to understanding accurately the science informing ecological debates on local habitats, a mix of subjective relevance and objective accuracy gains, can help pupils to make sensitized and principled personal decisions, which not only outline their own views but which also recognize and appreciate the contested and different beliefs others may have on these types of matter. If assessment is required, Thorburn (2008) found that a mixed assessment approach consisting of a first person informed account of the activity (subjective) which merges with the reporting of factual knowledge (objective) is the most viable method to adopt. In cultivating these ambitions it might be anticipated that teachers' lack of subject knowledge could be an obstacle to making learning progress. However, Kind (2009) found that trainee science teachers were more successful teaching lessons outside of their subject specialism than within it, due to the greater likelihood of trainee teachers seeking out the advice of more experienced colleagues. As Kind (2009) argues, supporting teachers in developing a wider range of pedagogical content knowledge skills within supportive professional communities is crucial for helping teachers to become more self-assured in their teaching.

**In a Scottish context, key to making such pedagogical gains is ensuring that teachers can see viable and well-chosen ways in which holistic and interdisciplinary learning practices can support the social constructivist model of teaching that curriculum guidelines encourage (Scottish Government, 2008). As Humes (2013) attests however achieving these ambitions requires a high level of teacher judgement in terms of managing to work effectively in less prescriptive and more flexible and open-ended learning environments, where there is greater latitude for improvisation and creativity, and shared partnership working with colleagues. In the context of school based outdoor learning, Thorburn and Allison (2013) reported on the mixed level of engagement there currently is with holistic and interdisciplinary learning approaches in Scotland. However, their reporting contained some examples of innovative practice which displayed many of the factors which later policy reporting (Education Scotland, 2014) have highlighted as being crucial for making well-being more meaningful for pupils. One school example which exemplified how pupils' learning experiences (the subjective) could merge with the mastery requirements of the curriculum (the objective achievement of set age and stage outcomes) through a collective focus on personal well-being and subject-based learning across different curriculum areas is now outlined.**

**The vision for the programme under review was established by the longstanding Headteacher and was aided by the new policy encouragement for schools to use timetable time in more flexible ways. Accordingly, a 90mins per week session was created for year 1 pupils (age 12-13 years; 125 pupils) to take part in an outdoor learning programme based in or near to the school grounds. Eight teachers from across the schools five curriculum faculties supported the programme. All were volunteers, and as there were more volunteers than places, teacher involvement is rotated on a yearly basis in order to share the vision and enlarge the professional community associated with the programme. The programme emphasis is on how achievement can be recognized in its broadest form with the content of the programme being**

wide ranging and continually evolving. In the past it has included science informed sessions (planting and growing), arts and literature sessions (print screens, making paper from leaves, creative writing) and activity based sessions (nature walks, orienteering). A variety of outside partners e.g., the Forestry Commission support the programme. The pedagogical emphasis is on pupils being active in their learning e.g., through being involved in the planning and co-constructing of lessons and through enthusiastically participating in group tasks. Social involvement was also important given that pupils entering the school were from a diverse range of up to twenty small size primary schools and are unfamiliar with each other and with the teachers. As well as engaging with the subject knowledge content associated with science, literature and the arts, pedagogical approaches were designed to connect with pupils' personal well-being experiences and with the wider cultural life and ethos of the school. Accordingly, pupils' narrative records of their experiences were widely displayed on noticeboards and newsletters so that pupils and parents were familiar with the programmes aims as it developed.

To generate evidence of attainment practical reasoning strategies encouraged pupils (in ways reflective of Tiberius, 2013b) to develop their reflective thoughts in an open-minded and self-scrutinizing way. Therefore, pupils were asked to connect and frame their experiences relative to becoming a 'responsible citizen', 'effective contributor', 'confident individual' and 'successful learner' - the current capacity building terms used in the Scottish curriculum. Teachers reviewed the experiences and information pupils had drawn upon in their narrative accounts and discussed with them their reporting (in ways which were reflective of Higgins, 2011 advice re learning practices being worthwhile and excellent to achieve), in order to clarify whether pupils' records were relevant and valid (Angner, 2010). This process also enabled teachers to address areas which might otherwise have remained rather undeveloped in pupils reporting e.g., opportunities which are available to pursue in the local area and also to open up a dialogue with pupils on contentious issues such as appropriate use of materials to

**make art with when outdoors. Overall, referencing pupils' accounts with the aims of the programme (adequacy criteria) enabled the school-based (non-formal) assessment requirements for recording personal well-being progress to be overtaken. It also provided teachers with informative feedback about the quality of pupils learning experiences and insights into their thoughts on holistic learning in ways which could enhance their own reflections on their professional role and remit. This process was not without its challenges however as it was acknowledged that many of the benefits of experience may take time for pupils to recognize e.g., the benefits of overcoming adversity and showing resilience when outdoors in testing circumstances. Overall, however engaging with pedagogical approaches which linked the subjective (personal) with the objective (achievement of outcomes) did not appear to unduly limit teachers' attempts to merge well-being values with subject knowledge imperatives and pupils' diverse previous experiences. This is impressive given that aspirational curriculum statements which emphasize both the personal nature of experience (subjective) and the outcomes of learning that require to be achieved (objective) is at the heart of the conceptual 'squaring an impossible circle' type concerns which have frequently been raised in Scotland as being problematic (see, for example, Priestley & Humes, 2010).**

In summarizing, the links between theoretical constructs of well-being and associated planning and practice issues, Figure 2 provides a diagrammatic representation of how the major influences most closely associated with desire fulfillment theories (Griffin, 1986) and Tiberius (2008) reflective wisdom character traits can articulate with well-being informed learning gains. In so doing, Figure 2 describes the relative strength of the association between constructs of well-being within school educational contexts. Figure 2 also highlights how curriculum planning can be both relevant for pupils and validated through pedagogical practices. Making progress on this basis could help ensure that practices have both a 'distinctive way of looking out and certain common features that can be seen from the outside' (Higgins, 2011, p. 69). Furthermore, if pursued with care, the bifurcation of having educational practices defined by their internal goods and institutions (schools) defined by

their external goods could be lessened, with institutions over time being considered as crucial to the growth and promotion of practice-based learning communities (Higgins, 2011). Overall, making progress on these matters could overtake some of the school-wide policy problems there are currently; where a lack of elaboration on the planning and practice issues associated with well-being impacts adversely on the quality of pupils learning experiences (Formby and Wolstenholme, 2012; Thorburn, 2014).

*Enter Figure 2 close to here*

## **Conclusion**

The main focus in the paper has been on outlining how the policy and practice of well-being learning and teaching in schools would benefit from a clearer engagement with recent theorizing on well-being values. Contrasting theoretical influences on well-being were reviewed with arguments developed on how a mixed approach which blended subjective and objective influences might best suit school-based developments. This is provided that the normative values chosen articulate clearly with related professional concerns on how the teaching of well-being can be effectively nurtured. Even though the potential for more radical schooling option exists, the paper advanced in more conservative terms, a series of practical ideas and suggestions on how greater curriculum and pedagogical progress could be achieved in holistic learning environments, where well-being values are integrated with subject knowledge imperatives and pupils' prior learning experiences. This, it was argued, was a realistic ambition for schools to try and achieve; as well-being in this light would be considered as pivotal in supporting gain in pupils overall level of educational achievement.

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